

God's Power!

Services: **Sunday**, 1/7 at 8:00 & 10:45 + **Monday**, 1/8 at 7 PM

Church Year: The Baptism of Our Lord – 2018

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: We each have strength, abilities, and love, but ▶our strength is low, ▶our abilities are limited, and ▶our love for God and others is tainted with sin 😞. **But God is MUCH DIFFERENT!** ▶His strength is almighty, ▶His abilities are limitless, and ▶His love is true!

In this sermon, *as we focus on the topic of God's power*, we will also learn more about *His abilities* and *His love* as we look at key parts of today's assigned Bible readings.

1. **God's Power to Create – Genesis 1:1-5:**

- a. **In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.... And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.** Those verses describe God's work on the first day of creation; *He created ▶time, ▶the heavens, ▶the earth, and ▶the light!* God worked *through the Son* to do His creating work; *regarding the Son*, the Bible says that **"all things were made through him"** (John 1:3 ESV).
- b. **And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.** Where the ESV Bible says, **"first day,"** the Hebrew Bible literally says, **"one day."** **"Moses used the cardinal number here instead**

of the ordinal form “first”; his time-related words make it quite clear that we are to understand this day 1 as a normal 24-hour day...” (TLSB, 12-13). **So let us marvel at God’s power to create so much in one normal day!**

2. **God’s Power through His Voice – Psalm 29**: The Bible says that **“The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars... of Lebanon...”** First, *think of the size of those cedars: Growing 130 feet tall but – even much more amazing – with trunks over 8 feet in diameter!* Also, **“Canaanite worship honored such trees”** (TLSB). So what did the LORD do? He demonstrated His GREAT POWER *by breaking those trees!* **So let us marvel at God’s power through His voice to break such trees!**

3. **God’s Power through Baptism – Romans 6:1-11**: During a baptism, a pastor is the *visible one* ✦ saying the words and ✦ applying the water, **but God the Father is actually the one at work, by the Holy Spirit**, to clothe the one being baptized in Christ, *thus imparting the benefits of Jesus’ saving work!* Therefore, these words were written to the Christians living in Rome: **“...all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death... we were buried... with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”**
 - a. Jesus actually died – *sealing His victory over sin and death*; then, through baptism, *God gave us the benefits of Jesus’ work – thus, knowing Jesus, we are sharing in His victory!*

b. Jesus was buried in a tomb; then He was raised on the third day! For us, through baptism, we *died to sin and were raised to new life in Christ!* Paul summarized our lives in Christ with these words: “...you... **must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.**” Dr. Kretzmann made this comment: “*In the same manner as Christ, though not in the same degree: we Christians, by virtue of our Baptism, are dead unto sin and live unto God, because the new life of God is planted into our hearts in Baptism.*” **So let us marvel at God’s power through baptism to kill the bad and enliven the good!**

4. **God’s Power to Forgive – Mark 1:4-8:** The Bible says that **John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.** In other words, *God loves all people and wants them to have His gift of forgiveness, so He sent John to preach the Law – so that people would see their sins and be sorry for their sins. Then the gospel – so that people would believe in the coming Christ. Then, coming to John, the people confessed their sins and John baptized them for the forgiveness of their sins. John said the words and applied the water, but GOD FORGAVE THEIR SINS, all of their sins!* **So let us marvel at God’s power to forgive through baptism!**

5. **God's Power to Save – Mark 1:9-11**: So God made a perfect world – NO SIN, *but the people ruined it!* Think about today's sin-filled world – *it's quite a mess!* Nevertheless, God is greater – **FAR GREATER** – than all of our sin! Therefore, He planned to save us; then He followed through, *even though it was so difficult – for God the Father and for God the Son!* These words describe Jesus' baptism; they tell us about His anointing with the Holy Spirit, they also mark the beginning of His ministry: **...Jesus... was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."** So ➡ God the Son was physically present, ➡ God the Holy Spirit descended upon the Son, and ➡ God the Father spoke from heaven! Lenski wrote these words to describe the significance of Jesus' baptism: **"By his baptism Jesus gave himself to the work of sin-bearing; by the anointing and by the voice from heaven the Father accepted him for this work"** (47). So the washing off of our filth was a monumental task, yet God ✓ desired it, ✓ planned it, and ✓ did it *through our Lord Jesus Christ!* **So let us marvel at God's power to completely save!**

Conclusion: And let us pray: Father in heaven, since You are so powerful, help us to ever ▶ be in awe of You, ▶ be sorry for our sins, ▶ rejoice in Your forgiveness, and ▶ go forward as You desire!

CONNECT WITH US ➔ Website: www.BethlehemLutheranChurchParma.com
Podcast: Benefit from the Bible | Facebook: Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, Ohio 44134, 440-845-2230